

than the fifth and longest. Tail with a subterminal dark band. Tarsus covered with a single plate.

Sericornis.—Bill longer than in *Acanthiza*, straight, the commissure straight from gape to tip. Wing rounded and concave, the wing-formula the same as in *Acanthornis*. Tail shorter than in the two preceding genera, without any dark bar. Tarsus covered with a single plate, or with almost obsolete broad scales.

Acanthornis magna is not uncommon on the slopes of Mount Wellington, Tasmania, and about the edges of forests on other southern mountains in the island, but from its retiring nature escapes observation, and its distribution is consequently not well worked out as yet. In a future note I hope to be able to say something of its habits and to describe its nest and eggs.

VIII.—*Ornithological Notes of a Tour in Cyprus in 1887.*

By Dr. F. H. H. GUILLEMARD, M.A., F.Z.S. *With a Preface by Lord LILFORD.*

(Plate II.)

PREFACE.

ALTHOUGH well aware that the author of the "Cruise of the 'Marchesa'" stands in no need of any introduction to those interested in ornithology, I may perhaps be allowed to mention that the collecting tour in Cyprus described in the following article was undertaken by Dr. Guillemard on my behalf.

I visited the southern and eastern coasts of the island in the spring of 1875 in the yacht 'Zara,' but owing to many delays on our voyage from Marseilles, the uncertainty concerning anchorage, and other causes, I had not much time to spare before the great heats of summer, and my rambles were confined to short distances from the sea. Soon after the British occupation of the island in 1878, I sent out Mr. W. Pearse, who had been with Mr. Danford in Asia Minor, to collect for me in Cyprus; but, on the whole, this

expedition was very meagre in zoological results, and unhappily ended in the death of the collector. I had, probably in common with many other British ornithologists, been hoping for some information on the fauna of Cyprus from some of our countrymen more or less permanently established there, ever since the year just mentioned, but in vain; and as I am convinced that the island, if properly worked, could show at least as long a list of birds as any district of equal area washed by the Mediterranean, I requested Dr. Guillemard to see what he could do there. I am very glad to say that he is about to start very shortly on a second collecting expedition to Cyprus, and I hope, with the permission of the Editors, to present the readers of 'The Ibis' before very long with a detailed list of the birds met with by him, Mr. Pearse, and myself.—L.

Bournemouth, Nov. 1887.

THOSE who are acquainted only with the more western islands of the Mediterranean—Corsica, with its snow-capped peak of Monte Rotondo peeping from above the pine-groves; Sicily, with Taormina, the champion view of Europe; Corfu, the richness of whose verdure is hardly to be surpassed even by Madeira—will be more than disappointed with the first view of Cyprus. They may consider themselves fortunate if their first port should chance to be Limassol. The long row of white houses, dotted here and there with date-palms; the tent-besprinkled slopes of Polymedia running back to the spurs of the Troödos range; the sunlight dancing on the crisp blue waters of the bay (and when is there not sun in Cyprus?)—all these form a pleasant picture enough; but the traveller is somehow conscious that the island has done her best; that she has, in short (may I be pardoned the metaphor!), got all her goods in the shop-window; and this impression is perhaps not entirely removed on a closer acquaintance. There are, no doubt, charming views in Cyprus; but they are those where the barren treelessness, so characteristic of the country, becomes softened or obliterated by the charm of distance.

Larnaka, however, is another affair altogether. Coasting round the island from Limassol one gets gradually prepared to expect little in the way of scenery. The land lessens in height, and is sparsely dotted with caroub-trees, which leave the glaring white gypseous soil far too much in evidence to be pleasant to the eye. Before reaching the port even the caroubs disappear. A long, low, and perfectly barren promontory, Cape Kiti, is rounded, and then the steamer drops anchor, leaving the naturalist to wonder whether he had not better continue his journey in her and leave Cyprus alone. He would make a great mistake if he were to do so; for the island, though not the most beautiful, is probably the most interesting in the Mediterranean Sea. Archæologically speaking, it certainly is so; but with archæology we have here nothing to do.

I landed at Larnaka on the 22nd of February. It was not long before I was experiencing the hospitality which the English in Cyprus apparently make it a point of honour to dispense to strangers. In many years of wandering I do not think I ever met with a more kindly welcome than that afforded me throughout the island, and I can only wish that 'The Ibis' had a larger circulation in Cyprus, in order that I might testify my appreciation of the kindness of my many hosts.

In the bazaar there were no birds of any special interest, though dozens of Goldfinches, many *Caccabis chukar*, and a few Calandra Larks hung up in cages for sale. The Red-legs get very tame and are often let out for an airing in front of their master's shop, where they take as little notice of the crowded traffic of the bazaar as a Seven Dials' fowl does of his surroundings. My host, too, had an aviary, or the rudiments of one. A Magpie, his character apparently none the better for his nationality, hopped warily about the garden, and had as companions a Francolin and two *Strix flammea*. The latter had been caught in Larnaka; but the species cannot be very common, as I never saw and only once doubtfully heard it during my stay in Cyprus. The Little Owl, *Athene noctua*, is abundant in the town, as it is, indeed,

in almost every part of the island I visited. It inhabits the roofs of the houses, and its slight domestic disagreements or faint cat-like mewings are common sounds of the night in a Cypriote house. At a later visit to Larnaka I obtained a good series of eggs of this species.

A walk in the environs of the town on the morning after my arrival was almost devoid of interest from an ornithologist's point of view. I visited the Government Gardens. The word garden can only be applied to the result of the floricultural endeavours of the islanders by a person whose sense of humour is subordinated to that of politeness; but it is unkindly Nature, and no unskilfulness on the part of the gardener, that causes the failure. These grounds were perhaps nearer to success than any others I saw, or would have been had they been under cultivation; but they had been deserted for two or three years or more. The ruined cottage at the entrance spoke only too plainly of the monetary disabilities under which Cyprus is labouring. The Turkish debt hangs like a millstone round her neck, and, until it is removed, all progress, whether in the Government Gardens or in the affairs of the island, will be alike an impossibility.

Larnaka is a poor collecting-ground, except for marsh- and lake-haunting birds, and being anxious to choose a good spot at which to establish myself for the spring migrants, I started for Nikosia without delay. The road, constructed by the English, traverses the dreary plain of the Mesorea (or Messaria, as it is invariably misspelt), the only interest of which is geological. At no very far distant epoch Cyprus existed as two separate islands, that to the north, long and narrow, a single mountain-range two or three thousand feet in height; that to the south less long, but of greater area—the present Troödos range. The intervening plain bears abundant evidences of its upheaval. It is dotted here and there with low flat-topped hills, and in many places extensive beds of fossil shells exist. In some of these that I afterwards examined there were large quantities of *Ostrea*, *Pecten*, and *Cyprina*.

The Mesorea is visited by *Otis tetrax*, which is occasionally

to be seen in the Nikosia market; and also, but more rarely, by *Otis tarda*, of which Mr. King, the District Commissioner, told me he had once had a recently-killed specimen brought to him. A species of *Pterocles* is now common, and I learnt on good authority that it breeds in the island. Among the birds I noticed on the road to the capital were the Magpie, Hooded Crow, Bunting, Goldfinch, Great Tit, *Saxicola morio*, and *Tinnunculus cenchris*, all of which are extremely common and generally distributed in almost every part of Cyprus I visited; the Bunting alone, perhaps, confining itself to low altitudes. The Chaffinch, of which I saw a single specimen, appears to retreat to the hills for the summer. A Stonechat or two were to be seen perched on the summit of the parched and stunted bushes, and I remarked a flock of Lapwings, a bird I never met with afterwards. Of the extraordinary abundance of the Crested Lark I need say nothing. At one place a migration of a small species of *Julus* was going on, the road being covered with them for fifty yards or more.

Everyone who has travelled in the East must have remarked that the Corvidæ have a distinct predilection for a town life. Ravens and Carrion Crows find Nikosia a good hunting-ground and are tame enough, and around the beautiful church of Santa Sophia, now a mosque, the Jackdaws chatter in hundreds. There are few other birds in the neighbourhood. *Vultur fulvus* floats lazily in the cloudless sky, or sits at the edge of the low, truncated *kopjes* near the Larnaka gate; and within the town *Tinnunculus cenchris* is nearly as common as the ubiquitous Sparrow; but these practically complete the list. On the 24th February I saw the Swallow for the first time, and three days later they were abundant. The temperature at this date was distinctly cold, for although at mid-day the mercury might stand at 65° Fahr. in the shade or even higher, it sank at night to 39° in the verandah. From the clearness and thinness of the air such weather is more felt than might be imagined, and though the Greek and Turkish houses are for the most part without fires, the English sit round their stoves with the same enjoyment as they gather on the hearth-rug at home in winter.

Finding a servant, procuring ammunition from Limassol, and trying to acquire some information about the island, took up some little time, and I did not leave the capital till March 4th. I had determined on visiting the lighthouse at the extremity of the Akrotiri peninsula for a few days, in order to watch the arrival of the migrants. All travelling is done in Cyprus by mule, and my first introduction to the native saddle, which I had resolved on using, was no more pleasant than such introductions usually are. Over the *stratouri*, as it is called—a pack-saddle of good pattern, so far as the comfort of the animal is concerned—is thrown a pair of strong saddle-bags of the ordinary Syrian type. A pair of stirrups, tied together with cord, is then laid across, and on the top a four-fold *paplouma* or quilt. Although there is a girth, it is never tightened, and the creature's load, whether animate or inanimate, depends almost entirely upon balance for its safety. Equitation in Cyprus appears to the tyro to offer no certainties but a broken neck; but after a time he learns to prefer the native saddle to an English "Peat," at all events for work upon the island.

We had hardly left Nikosia an hour, before some heavy rain-clouds, which had been threatening for some time, broke over us, accompanied by a bitter wind from the north-west. The barren, lifeless plain looked dreary beyond description, and on reaching the Idalia river, a dry, stony watercourse, as are most of the "rivers" of Cyprus, I decided to halt for the night. I obtained lodgings at a Turkish house in the little village of Pera-khorio. Next morning the villagers brought me a small stone head of Assyrian type, in excellent preservation, and a tame Rook. These birds do not appear to be common, as, indeed, might be expected; and I believe the greater part, if not all of them, leave the island in the spring.

Next morning the weather was fine, and the wind had veered to north-east. In spite of the sun, it was so cold in the forenoon that I wore a thick pea-jacket with pleasure. Our way lay southward towards Mount Stavrovouni, and leaving the plain we came into a country of low, irregular

hills, the valleys between which were chiefly vineyards and corn-land. The vines, however, were leafless, and no sign of spring in the shape of an anemone or ranunculus was to be seen. We passed large flocks of goats, which were invariably accompanied by still larger flocks of the White Wagtail, each animal having two or three of these birds in close attendance.

A decided change was visible on arriving at the southern slopes of the island. Anemones appeared, a few stray butterflies were occasionally to be seen (*Pontia cardamines*, *Pieris crategi*, and *Gonepteryx rhamni*), and low bushes afforded cover for various birds. I saw a tolerable number of Black-birds, some specimens of *Anthus*, the Wren, Robin, Redstart (*Ruticilla titys*), and the first and only Blue Tit that I met with in the island. At one place I noticed a solitary *Hirundo rustula*, a species which I did not again come across until long afterwards. Although it is, perhaps, to be found in each of the Districts of the island, it is very local. It occurs at Famagusta, at the ruins of Bellapais, at Kyrenia, in the pass above Lanarka tou Lapethou, and near the village of Poli; but at all these places it seemed to frequent the immediate neighbourhood of its home, and never to go far a-field.

Arriving at Tochni, an old Greek woman welcomed me at her house in the customary Cypriote fashion, swinging a small censer around me and enveloping me in little clouds of perfumed smoke. On such occasions the guest bows, thanks his host, and making the sign of the cross is thereafter protected from evil spirits during his residence in the house. Next day they brought me a lad who was said to be suffering from the sting of a “σφαλάγγη” inflicted five months before. Whether the injury was due to this cause or not I cannot say, but the right eye was completely hidden by an indurated and ill-looking swelling of the upper eyelid and neighbouring parts, and its structure in all probability destroyed. The σφαλάγγη, a sand-wasp of the genus *Mutilla* (*M. hungarica*), is extremely dreaded by the Cypriotes, who believe its sting to be occasionally capable of causing death.

On the 7th of March I found myself established at the

lighthouse at Cape Gato. The headland is said to be so called from the number of cats that at one time ran wild in the neighbourhood. There are none now, at least I never saw any; but on two or three occasions I came across places where the ground had been rooted up by pigs. The wild boar, however, does not exist in Cyprus, and these, like the cats, are merely tame animals escaped from civilization. The light is 109 feet above the sea, and is a dioptric of the fourth order, flashing every two minutes, and visible at a distance of twenty miles. The Akrotiri peninsula, at the extremity of which it is placed, is practically uninhabited, and is a wide stretch of barren moorland, which in the neighbourhood of Cape Gato is covered with stunted bushes. Here and there a travesty of a tree is to be seen, with an inclination of branches sufficient to show that the prevailing winds are from the west.

I stayed ten days at the lighthouse, and was on the whole disappointed with the result. The spring migration was no doubt in full swing, but no birds ever came to the light, and the lighthouse-keeper, a Cypriote Greek, told me that, excepting upon two occasions, he had never known a bird killed. The Spectacled Warblers (*Sylvia conspicillata*), flying with their short jerky flight from one low bush to another, were tolerably plentiful for the first two or three days; but afterwards they became decidedly less so, having most probably taken their departure for other parts of the island. Although some may remain the winter, a great number of them are no doubt migrants. In Cyprus they appear chiefly to haunt the semi-moorland country such as I have just described, and are fairly common on the great stretch of flat uncultivated land lying between Larnaca and Famagusta. I have never seen them in the bush-country in the hills, as one sees them in Madeira. I was delighted to meet with the beautiful little *Sylvia melanothorax* on the first morning after my arrival. I found them in pairs, not plentiful at first, but becoming more so before my departure on the 17th March. Although I shot them afterwards in many different places in the island, from the sea-level up to 2000 feet or more in altitude, I

never succeeded in obtaining their eggs, though I believe that I might have done so on the Akrotiri peninsula had I remained there till the breeding-season. Lord Lilford, however, tells me that he was never able to discover the nest, although the birds were evidently breeding in considerable numbers in the neighbourhood of Salamis.

Sylvia melanothorax appears to frequent much the same ground as the Spectacled Warbler. With regard to its habits, I can add little to the description of Canon Tristram. In the male the eye-ring is red; the iris ruddy brown or, sometimes, yellowish; and the feet and tarsus vary from dark brownish yellow to ruddy brown. The female has a much less bright eye-ring, the iris is less ruddy, and the feet are paler. The bill in both is dark brown, the proximal end of the lower mandible being of a pale fleshy-yellow. Length in the flesh:—♂, 13·4–13·8 centimetres; ♀, 13·4–13·5.

Haunting the same ground as the above two species, but so uncommon that I only secured two specimens, was *Sylvia melanocephala*. I never saw it again in any other part of the island, although I believe Lord Lilford found it tolerably abundant near the Karpas.

The perpendicular cliffs forming the southern boundary of the peninsula were the home of many *Gyps fulvus*, Rock-Pigeons, and Kestrels (*Tinnunculus cenchris*), and on a slab of rock immediately below the lighthouse, inaccessible except by boat, a seal might often be seen "hauled up." Here, too, I shot the beautiful *Falco eleonoræ*, and watched through my telescope the movements of a pair of Cormorants. When walking along the eastern coast I twice disturbed *Alcedo ispida* from its perch on a small rock at the head of a miniature bay. That *Halcyon smyrnensis* exists in Cyprus I have no doubt whatever, for the bird was well described to me by two different persons; and Lord Lilford tells me that he also had credible evidence as to its occurrence. Rather more curious is the fact that *Ceryle rudis* is also found on the island. Its appearance and habits were described to me in such a manner by Mr. Cade, the present Commissioner of the Kyrenia district, who had been for some time a resident

on the west coast of Africa, as to leave no room for doubt about the matter.

On the moorlands a few Robins and Blackbirds were to be seen, and the snapping note of the Stonechat, a bird so shy as seldom to admit of a near approach, was a familiar sound. But the one common bird was the Song Thrush, at that time preparing for its departure. I do not know that I have ever seen a species occurring in greater abundance than this. Almost every step put up one, and small isolated bushes would quite commonly afford shelter to five or six. Spring at this time might be said to be fairly established. Butterflies of the genus *Polyommatus* and *Papilio machaon* were common, and the ground was covered with yellow ranunculus and anemone. The minimum night-temperature at this time ranged from 44°-49° Fahr., the diurnal maximum in the shade from 63°-72°. The wind was chiefly easterly, often veering with the sun to west, and not unfrequently blowing very hard. One of the chief characteristics of Cyprus, indeed, is the prevalence of strong winds. On several days during my stay on the island it was almost impossible to go out of doors, the dust occasioned by these gales being well nigh intolerable.

Wandering one day among the scrub, about two miles from the lighthouse, I suddenly came across some ruins of great interest, which I afterwards found to be unknown to the English on the island. Passing over the less important remains, the chief feature was a chamber of large size (72 by 36 feet) hewn in the solid rock. The top of its roof was level with the surrounding soil, and the entrance was reached by a passage, also rock-hewn, with a stiff slope. About twenty yards to the west was a similar chamber, but in this one the roof has fallen in. Whether these remains are of the nature of tombs or temples it is difficult to say; but there is little doubt that they owe their existence to Phœnician hands. The Akrotiri peninsula was in those days well populated. A little further to the west are the ruins of Katalymata, and still nearer Cape Zephgari lie the broken columns and shapeless stone-heaps of Kurias. The remains

of yet another city can be made out on the coast about equidistant from these two, and the cliff-face is in many places dotted with rock-cut tombs and old quarry-workings.

These sites of ancient cities are often the best hunting-grounds for the ornithologist, and here I shot the only Blue Rock Thrush that I obtained in Cyprus. When I first saw it, it was sitting on the top of a small tree. I mistook it for a Starling, and, although familiar with the bird, it was not until it flew down on a low stone that I recognized it. Here, too, on March 10th, I saw the first Hoopoe, a bird which seemed to me to be far less common on the island than in Greece. I was assured by two or three people, however, that it was not nearly so abundant as usual.

Although during my stay at the lighthouse I was on the alert at various times in the night for the passage of migrants, I never either saw or heard any, except on one occasion, when for about half an hour a flight passed over us at no great height. I could not, however, succeed in distinguishing with certainty the note of any one species, although it is probable that some of them were Wheatears; for next morning (March 14th) these birds, of which up till then not a single specimen had appeared, were quite common, and I could have shot thirty or forty of them had I wished to do so.

The Akrotiri promontory is nearly separated from the mainland by a salt lake about three or four miles long, which in bygone days must have communicated with the sea. To the south it has no well-defined limit, and loses itself imperceptibly in a vast expanse of dead level white sand, the glare from which is blinding. On this side I found few birds save a stray Redshank and the two Ringed Plovers (*Ægialitis hiaticula* and *Æ. minor*). My only rarity was *Æ. geoffroyi*. A curious incident occurred one day as I was walking along this barren shore, the surface of which was so smooth and flat that a marble would have been noticeable at a distance of fifty yards. A Snipe got up almost at my feet. That it should be found at all in such a place was curious enough, but that it should have escaped observation was almost incredible.

On the 17th March I changed my quarters to Episcopi, a little Turkish village near the site of the ancient Curium. Unlike most Cypriote villages it was decidedly pretty. An abundance of clear little streams brattled through the streets, and each house had its garden of lemons, mulberries, figs, and apricots. The latter trees were in full blossom, and the ground was everywhere strewn with the fallen petals. Ten or twelve miles away to the south-east I could plainly discern the lighthouse I had just left, while to the west the yellow, hewn bluff of Curium stood out in bold relief against the blue waters of the bay.

The fields surrounding the village were tilled and irrigated with great care, and birds were numerous. The gardens would, no doubt, have been a better collecting-ground; but as the owners were chiefly Mohammedans, I could not obtain permission to shoot in them. A goodly number of caroub trees (*Ceratonia siliqua*) were scattered about. They are planted singly, in the middle or by the side of the fields, never in groves, and their fruit (the "locust bean" of commerce) is one of the most important exports of Cyprus. In each of these trees one or more Thrushes were invariably to be found, and the clear loud "wheet" of *Phylloscopus rufus*, and the ringing note of the Great Tit, were constantly to be heard among their branches. The Linnets (the Eastern form, *Fringilla bella*) and Goldfinches fed in great numbers on the freshly tilled land, and were still packed in flocks at the end of March. The latter may be said to be the commonest bird in Cyprus; nowhere else have I seen it in such enormous numbers.

I had obtained *Phylloscopus rufus* on the 8th of March, but it was not until the 18th that I saw the first Blackcap. A day or two later they became numerous. This species, I believe, has been called the "Cyprus bird," from its abundance on the island. The name is not undeserved, for, with the exception, perhaps, of *Hypolais elaiica*, it is the commonest of all the Warblers. About this time the Swallows were commencing to build. Their tameness was extraordinary. While brushing my hair one morning before an old looking-glass

hanging from the wall, a pair of them came and perched on it, pouring out a torrent of song, regardless of my presence. Another pair always roosted in my room at Episkopi, their perch being within a couple of yards of where I usually sat. Their regularity in beginning the day was wonderful. From a quarter to ten minutes to six (never later and never earlier) they left their roosting-place for their first short flight up and down the room, and I was left but little peace until they were let out.

One of my first excursions from Episkopi was to Curium, a site that has probably been more explored by archæologists (*soi-disant* or otherwise) than any other in the island. Its yellow cliffs were the haunt of innumerable Jackdaws and Kestrels (*Tinnunculus cenchris*), and the great prickly lizard, *Agama stellio*, watched, motionless, here and there on the summits of the fallen stones below. On the hill where the city once stood, now a mass of rubble overgrown with scrub, I found *Caccabis chukar* abundant. The Kestrels were, no doubt, breeding, and I shot one in the act of bringing a Thrush to the nest. Judging from dissection, however, their food appears to consist chiefly of Coleoptera and Locusts. In skinning them I found that the greater part of the body-surface immediately beneath the skin was dotted with numerous ova, about one half the size of those of the bluebottle fly. A strong lens showed two minute black dots at one end. I did not meet with these ova in any other bird I skinned in Cyprus, but I found them on all the Kestrels I examined.

On the road towards Colossi, where stands a massive square tower, built, probably, at the beginning of the 14th century by the Lusignans, the country was too open to offer many attractions. Its only beauty lay in the wealth of little blue iris (*Iris sisyrinchium*) which lines the road on either hand, and the cyclamens springing from the interstices of the rocks. The Kuris river (an open nullah of dry sand and boulders) is crossed soon after leaving the village. Feeding on some bushes on its banks, I shot the Serin Finch, which, on the whole, is not common on the island. In habits, note, and general appearance this bird, which I here shot for the first

time, reminded me strongly of the African *Fringilla angolensis*. Harriers were not uncommon, but very shy, and it was some days before I succeeded in obtaining one, a beautiful old male *Circus swainsoni*. The only rarity that I saw during my stay at Episkopi was a *Regulus* of some species, which I was unlucky enough to fail in obtaining.

The scattered stones with which the fields and roadsides of Cyprus are so abundantly provided afforded a good hunting-ground for the Coleopterist; but the spoil to be obtained by turning them over was by no means limited to beetles. Under nearly every one might be found the pretty spotted lizard *Chalcides ocellatus*, a small species of *Julus*, and not unfrequently a scorpion (*Buthus europæus*), at this season generally immature. *B. peloponnensis* is apparently a far less common species. While searching a bed of brilliant yellow *Calendula* for insects, I one day noticed a fly struggling in a most energetic manner upon one of the flowers without any apparent reason. My curiosity being roused, I examined it more closely, and then, to my astonishment, discovered that the creature was in the jaws of a spider, which, in colouring, exactly matches the vivid yellow of the corolla that served at once as its home and lure. I had had the flower in my hand some time, I dare say three or four seconds, before I saw it. Afterwards, on careful examination of the flowers around, I found that these spiders were abundant, but in every case they kept carefully to the corolla, where alone they remained invisible.

This species (*Thomisus onustus*) is also, as the Rev. O. P. Cambridge informs me, found sparingly in the heath districts of the south of England, and varies in tint according to the colour of the blooms it inhabits. The female alone appears to adopt this method of procuring its food, the male being very rarely found.

Athene noctua exists in such numbers at Episkopi that the village may be regarded as its metropolis. Its clear ringing note, "*poo, pooep,*" can be heard in almost every garden—seldom or never by day (although the bird often flies at that time), and not very commonly at night. Theirs is the

“Song of the setting sun,” beginning when the muezzin shouts his mournful cry from the minaret, and the connexion of the two sounds and the brilliant sunsets that accompanied them are among the most vivid of my recollections of the little Turkish village. The Cypriotes have a quaint story about the bird, under the idea, which I could never personally confirm, that the two notes, as in the case of the African *Telephonus babakiri*, are uttered by different birds. They say that one of these Owls once borrowed four loaves of a friend and only returned three, declaring that to have been the number lent. Their descendants have ever since kept up the quarrel, and that is why, when the one says “*τρῆς*,” the other instantly retorts with “*τ’σ’ρα*.” I regret that I am unable to say whether the note is only uttered by the female.

The season was hardly yet sufficiently advanced for snakes, but on returning to my house one evening I found that a peasant had brought me a very fine specimen of *Zamenis viridiflavus*, 4 feet 5 inches in length, brownish green, with a bright yellow belly. This species is very common on the island, and I afterwards obtained a good series of the different varieties.

It was not until a day or two before my departure from Episkopi that I found that there was a good marsh at the north-west corner of the salt lakes I have already mentioned. It was within tolerably easy reach, and I visited it twice. I understood from the officers of the 49th Regt., then quartered at Limassol, that it abounded in the winter with Ducks of many kinds. I found a few Mallard and Teal, and Snipes were very abundant. From a flock of eight or ten I shot a Ruff in immature or non-breeding plumage; but I got nothing of special interest, with the exception of *Sylvia rueppelli*, which I found haunting the tamarisk-bushes in, or on the edges of, the swamp.

I left Episkopi March 29th. The village, as I afterwards learnt, was supposed to be unhealthy, and although I had not been actually laid up, I had never felt well during the whole of my stay there. The neighbourhood of the salt lakes

has a bad name, and at the village of Akrotiri, which is situated close to them, the infant mortality is said to be such that there is always one (but only one) baby in the place. Passing through Limassol, and picking up a few necessary provisions, I struck northwards into the mountains, having fixed on Jerona, a little hamlet at an altitude of 1700 feet, as my station for a few days. I camped *en route* at the village of Agrounda. It was my first experience under canvas in Cyprus, and by no means a very pleasing one, for, in spite of having barricaded the tent to the best of my ability with my luggage, it was burglariously entered, and everything eatable stolen by pariah dogs during the night. To the last day of my residence on the island I could never make up my mind as to whether camp or village life was the lesser evil. In the one case I warred with dogs and ants, in the other with fleas and a less lively but equally obnoxious insect. I was like the gentleman who sought advice as to the matrimonial state. It did not matter whether I took up my quarters with the village Muktar, or went under canvas. In either case I was sure to regret my action.

The southern range of mountains affords some exceedingly fine views, and the abruptness of the valleys reminded me strongly of some parts of Madeira, though it must be admitted that the lack of trees detracts considerably from the beauty of the scenery. The hills were ablaze with flowers—rock-roses, cyclamens, and furze; but I do not think I ever saw a country poorer in bird-life. Not a single Raptorial bird was to be seen, and the only species I noticed during a whole day's ride were *Saxicola morio*, *Emberiza cæsia*, and *Sylvia melanothorax*. I found Jerona a dirty village, with still dirtier inhabitants, but magnificently situated on a spur overlooking a deep and picturesque valley. There were no more birds here, however, than I had seen on my way up from Agrounda, and, after a day's rest, I decided to push on. My next stopping-place was Leokara, a large village some hours to the eastward; but I met with no better fortune here than at Jerona, and I left as soon as I was able, reaching Larnaka on the 7th of April. I should have started a day

earlier but for the fact that heavy rain was falling in the low country. The season of 1887 was one of extraordinary drought—a drought so severe that in the eastern parts of the island there was practically no harvest, and in consequence the people were reduced almost to a state of famine. During the whole period of my residence in Cyprus I only saw rain upon three occasions. I am bound to say, however, that on one of them at least three inches must have fallen.

To the south of Larnaka, at no great distance from the town, is a large salt lake, which affords an inexhaustible supply of salt of excellent quality, a monopoly of the British Government. Along its level, glaring shore it is rare to see a bird, but towards the south-western extremity a little stream expands to form a marsh, in which I found many species of water-fowl. *Ardea cinerea*, *A. bubulcus*, and *A. comata* were here, and, in spite of the lateness of the season, I found plenty of full Snipes and a single Jack. The natives told me that some of the former remain throughout the summer; but as they are largely given to needless romancing, I do not guarantee the accuracy of the statement. The tiny *Cisticola schænicola* was abundant, rising twenty or thirty feet into the air when disturbed, and plunging up and down in a series of short dives, uttering at each its single note of alarm. On the outskirts of the marsh I shot the Waterhen (*Gallinula chloropus*) and the Sedge Warbler (*Acrocephalus phragmitis*); but the best bird in my bag was *Porzana parva*, retrieved from deep water by a good mongrel belonging to a peasant, who twice threw the bird back into the pool in order to demonstrate the extraordinary sagacity of his dog, heedless of my cries of mingled rage and anxiety from the opposite bank.

The Greek Easter was at this time in full swing, but its festivities were, perhaps, a little less festive than usual, owing to the prevailing agricultural depression. Food had become so expensive that the natives had to part with their mules, donkeys, and cattle for what they would fetch: a sum, in many cases, inconceivably small. My host's servant one day bought an excellent little cow for three shillings and four

pence, and a week or two later, when at Kyrenia, I found that donkeys were being shipped across to the Karamanian coast in large numbers by an enterprising Hebrew. No one, however, cared to do any work during the holiday season; and, partly because I was unable to get transport, partly because I had found an excellent lake for water-fowl to the north of Larnaka, I remained in the town until April 19th.

I heard the first Cuckoo April 13th, and saw one four days later. At this season the Sparrows in the town collect in large flocks of four or five hundred individuals, just before sunset, and fly round and round for half an hour or more before going to roost. In no part of the world have I seen such enormous numbers of Swifts as in Larnaka, but they were all *Cypselus apus*. As on my first visit, I found birds scarce, and the only species worthy of mention was *Pycnonotus xanthopygius*. Although I did not shoot it, I have little doubt about the bird, for it perched in a tree above me, within a couple of yards of my head. At the lake to the north of Larnaka (a nice sheet of water, about an hour's ride from the town) I found *Plegadis falcinellus* in small flocks of a dozen or fifteen individuals. They permitted a tolerably near approach; but the Stilts, of which there were numbers, were exceedingly shy. Each time I visited the place I found three Swans swimming in conscious security in the middle of the lake. I tried a long shot at them on one occasion, and, whether in consequence of this or not I cannot say, a peasant several days later brought in a wounded bird to my host. It turned out to be *Cygnus olor*.

Leaving Larnaka I rode to Famagusta, or rather to its Christian suburb, Varosia. The road lies for a few miles along the shore, and then, turning off at the head of Larnaka Bay, crosses the barren stretch of land which ends in the Cape Greco promontory some 20 miles to the S.E. Nothing more dreary and depressing can well be conceived. The plain is nearly a dead level, featureless save for one or two ruined and solitary churches, which are visible at an immense distance, and add still further to the effect of loneliness and desolation. I had found an enormous flock of *Larus melano-*

cephalus at the head of the bay, feeding about half a mile inland on beetles and *Helix pisana*, a snail which exists in such numbers that the herbage and stunted shrubs were nearly white with them in some places. But after leaving the sea hardly a bird was to be seen. With the exception of the Crested Lark, I think that a solitary Harrier and a few pairs of *Sylvia conspicillata* were the only species I noticed.

Varosia shows what may be done in Cyprus with plenty of water and careful cultivation. A strip of gardens extends along the coast between the village and the sea for a distance of about three or four miles. They are the great pomegranate- and orange-orchards of the island. Here I spent three or four days in the vain hope of finding some of the rarer Warblers. The Blackcap and *Hypolais elatica* were common enough, but there appeared to be no other, except a few *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*. *H. elatica* I found here for the first time (April 21st), so that it must be a tolerably late arrival. It is the commonest of its family, being found at every altitude and in every part of the island; but the olive-trees seem to be its favourite hunting-ground. The song is a meaningless unfinished warble, consisting generally of four or five notes repeated over and over again.

The walls of the magnificent fortress of Famagusta and the ruins of the numerous churches destroyed by the Turkish bombardment of 1571 are tenanted by innumerable Jackdaws and *Tinnunculus cenchris*, and not a few *Athene noctua*. On the battlements I shot *Hirundo rufula*, and found its nest in a rock-hewn cavern, attached to the smooth flat roof. In general this is the situation adopted, but sometimes the back of the nest is built against a beam, or against a wall where it joins the ceiling. The entrance is a short tunnel, with a slightly covered lip. The eggs are pure white, and, in this case, were six in number.

I heard the Bee-cater (*Merops apiaster*) on April 24th, and saw it and the Roller on the following day. Both are abundant in Cyprus. On the 26th I visited a small lake about a couple of miles westward of the town. The graceful little Tern, *Sterna minuta*, hovered at the mouth of a small stream

that fed it, and was almost the only species that permitted me to approach within reasonable range. I saw also *Sterna caspia*, *Larus melanocephalus*; the three Herons, *Ardea bubulcus*, *garzetta*, and *comata*; the small Plovers *Æ. cantianus*, *hiaticula*, and *minor*; and a species of Whimbrel. *Anthus cervinus* I found feeding in small flocks of twenty or thirty individuals on the wet ground near the lake, and, in spite of the lateness of the season, I put up a number of Snipes. The only uncommon bird in my bag, however, was the Little Grebe (*Podiceps minor*). The Turtle Dove (*Turtur auritus*) arrived about this date, and on my ride back I disturbed numbers of them from the caroub trees.

I had intended, after leaving Famagusta, to proceed to the Karpas, a long promontory jutting out for 40 or 50 miles at the north-east part of the island; but the little time left to me before the summer, and the fact that a famine was then prevailing in that district, made me resolve on making for the north-east at once. Not a mule was to be had in the whole of Famagusta, but, fortunately, a rough road existed as far as Lefkoniko, and I was able to get a native cart to carry my baggage thither, trusting to find mules or donkeys to carry it on to Akanthu, where I proposed to take up my quarters for a week or so. On my way I passed a nice marsh (little, if at all, known to the English), where I put up several Snipes and Ducks, although only walking a few yards into it. At Lefkoniko I was detained for two days by incessant rain. A torrent, about eighteen inches in depth, rushed through the streets, and all going out was an impossibility until the afternoon of the second day. I found a nest of *Melanocorypha calandra*, with the eggs already hard-set, and saw a few *Cypselus melba* and a great number of Bee-eaters. The barley was being cut and carried, and I was astounded at the enormous number of Turtle Doves feeding in the fields. In one flock there must have been at least six or seven hundred birds, and were more probably a thousand. The ravages of this species, I should imagine, must be distinctly felt by the farmers. I ought to add, however, that I never saw them so numerous at any other place on the island.

The track from Lefkoniko to Akanthu crosses the northern range by a low pass, so low, indeed, that it is hardly worthy of the name. The mountains, too, are on a corresponding scale, for they are nowhere much above 3000 feet in height; but the abruptness of their northern face makes the scenery very much finer than would be expected, and this coast is undoubtedly the most beautiful part of the island. I had hoped to find something new in the fauna or flora, and was not disappointed, for directly after beginning the descent on the further side I shot a specimen of the beautiful *Emberiza melanocephala*, and soon found it to be common enough here, though south of the pass not one was to be found. I afterwards noticed a few on the Troödos range; but the true home of this species is on the northern coast. The same may be said of the two Shrikes, *Lanius nubicus* and *L. collurio*. The former I observed in two or three places on the slopes of the southern mountains, but, to the best of my recollection, I never saw the Red-backed Shrike anywhere but at the north of the island and on Mt. Troödos. It is worthy of note that in almost every individual of these two species I found three or four filiform helminths beneath the skin at the back of the neck.

Akanthu was in many ways an interesting place, though its interest perhaps lay more in the people and their customs than in anything else. They were more energetic than the ordinary Cypriote, although possibly quite as little to be depended on, and I was able to get a few men to help me in collecting, which I had hitherto found almost impossible. From the crags above the village I got three young *Gyps fulvus*, one of which (brought to me on May 5th) had only been hatched four or five days. *Scops giu* was also brought alive to me, having been taken while sitting on its eggs from a hole in the roof of a house. The village was placed on a series of arid spurs about six hundred feet above the sea, and if one chose to look for them, there was no lack of scorpions and *Scolopendre*, although they seldom obtruded themselves on one's notice. Life was, nevertheless, a burden from other causes. Sand-flies and mosquitos harassed one at night, and

countless thousands of flies by day. As for the fleas, Cyprus is no exception to the rule that in the East, like the poor, we have them always with us.

Of what the world at large calls obnoxious creatures, perhaps one of the best that I secured was a magnificent specimen of *Vipera xanthina*. It was of considerable length, and as thick as the middle of a man's forearm. The rapid tapering of the tail and the dirty colouring of the reptile give it a repulsive appearance, which is not belied by its character. The Commissioner for the Famagusta district informed me of the death of a man from snake-bite just at this time, the event occurring at the village at which he happened to be staying, and I have no doubt that it was to this species that it was due. Such occurrences must be very rare. Travellers have given the island a bad name for snakes, and have repeated over and over again the statement that the natives wear high boots to protect them from the "deadly asps" with which it abounds. It is true that snakes are extraordinarily abundant in Cyprus, and equally true that every peasant wears high boots, but almost all these reptiles are harmless, and the boots are worn as a protection against the thorns with which the stunted bushes are so liberally provided. *Koufi* is the name by which almost every snake except *Zamenis viridiflavus* is known, and even the little *Typhlops vermicularis* is inserted in the Cypriote black list.

I heard the first Nightingale on the 4th May. On the 9th I left Akanthu and proceeded westward in the direction of Kyrenia, skirting the shore closely. In many places traces of rock-cut tombs and quarries and heaps of rubble testified to the fact that in Greek or pre-Greek days this coast must have been thickly populated. *Anthus arboreus* fed in pairs in the stubble, or rather what should have been the stubble, for here the corn is generally pulled up by the roots, and the latter cut off against a fixed sickle. *Emberiza melanocephala* was very common, but it was singular to note how much the males were in excess of the females. At one place I heard the Francolin, a bird which is apparently becoming rarer from year to year in Cyprus, or at any rate

more limited in its distribution, although it is still abundant at the southern and western parts of the island.

I camped below the ruins of Bellapais, a magnificent semimonastic building of the Lusignan period, with a great part of the beautiful cloisters still standing, and spent most of the following day in photographing it. *Hirundo rufula* was in great abundance here, and in a large hall, which was doubtless the refectory, there were many nests. Most of them were inaccessible, but from one I took some eggs, no doubt of a second clutch. The Commissioner of the Kyrenia district, with whom I was staying later, informed me that a pair had raised three broods of young ones in one season in a nest built in his bedroom.

The medieval fortress of Kyrenia, and the remains of the walls and other fortifications by which the ancient town was surrounded, would take many days thoroughly to explore, and I regretted that I had not more time to devote to them. My rambles in the neighbourhood were very unproductive. There are numerous foxes, as there are, indeed, in most parts of the island. Hares, too, are fairly abundant. A native sportsman at Akanthu, who seemed a tolerably good observer, declared that there were two species of the latter animal, one of which was entirely confined to the mountains. He described it as being of a darker colour and smaller size; but though I offered to pay him well if he brought a specimen, I never got one. Those that I shot on the island did not seem to differ from our species. Their average weight was a little over 7 lbs.

I arrived at Lapethus, a village a few miles to the west of Kyrenia, on the 15th May. With its streams of running water and abundance of greenery it has a fair claim to be considered one of the prettiest places in the island. Here I wasted three days in a vain search for caves, none of those I found being of sufficient size to render digging worth while. I hardly added a specimen to my collection. Few birds were to be seen, and I find in my diary a note against a *Sylvia melanothorax* I shot here, "anything but common on this northern side." This part and the promontory of

Kormakiti just beyond are two of the best places for Woodcocks in the island.

The heat by day had by this time become very great, an unpleasant reminder that my time on the island was drawing to a close, and that I had still a considerable amount of ground to be worked before my departure. I was desirous of seeing something of the southern slopes of the range before I quitted the district, and accordingly started on the 19th May for a hamlet known as Larnaka tou Lapethou. This place is supposed, though I do not know exactly why, to have been the burial-place of the city of Lapethus in ancient days. It seems to the last degree improbable that they should have taken the trouble to carry their dead over rough mountain-paths to a place so far distant ; for Larnaka, though not far off as the crow flies, is, owing to the impassable nature of the mountains, quite three hours by road from the ruins of Lapethus. From whatever reason, however, there are remains of many tombs, and, in particular, a bilingual inscription in Phœnician and Greek, described by Cesnola, which I was anxious to photograph. I stayed a day only at this place—long enough for me to take my views and copies and to remark upon the paucity of bird-life. It is singular that there should be so few birds of prey in these mountainous districts. My servant told me that he had put up a covey of Red-legs, the young birds “grandes comme une Caille,” close to our camp, and there were other evidences of the earliness of the season in the parched appearance of the surrounding country.

I descended into the plains and reached the village of Morphou, a place of some little size, on the evening of May 20th. The ride across the endless stretch of level ground was uninteresting to a degree. The harvest, which was fairly good in this district, was in most places carried. The ubiquitous Sparrow, a stray Grey Crow or two, and innumerable Swifts were the only birds I noticed, with the exception of a pair of Black Vultures (*Vultur monachus*), an old bird and a full-grown young one. The latter I was fortunate enough to shoot with a charge of No. 6. shot, after a long stalk and

a trudge of two or three miles. He measured 9 feet 5 inches from tip to tip, and was so heavy and unmanageable that, finding I could not drag him back to my mule, I reluctantly left him, after cutting off the head and feet.

There was nothing to keep me at Morphou except a marsh, or what was described to me as one, in its neighbourhood. The drought had had its effect upon it, however, and I found it like a pond, little else but dry land and water nearly reaching my waist. Numbers of Pratincoles were hawking over it, and now and again dropping on the shingle of the neighbouring beach to rest. I was glad to do the same, for a slight touch of African fever from which I was suffering rendered me incapable of much exertion under such a powerful sun. From what I saw I judged that the marsh, from an ornithologist's point of view, was comparatively deserted.

I had planned my route to the southern and western parts of the island *via* Lefka and the much be-praised Maratassa valley, and started on May 23rd. The former place is charmingly bowered in mulberry and other fruit-trees and abounds in Nightingales. I saw here for the first time a beautiful little lizard, which in appearance reminded me of a Charr, the belly being bright pink and the sides ornamented with well-marked blue spots, probably a brilliantly coloured variety of *Lacerta muralis*. The Maratassa valley is disappointing, but the beautiful stream of clear water that rushes down between its abrupt sides atones for much in such an arid land as Cyprus. It can hardly be called a gorge, yet it is not a valley. Great quantities of grapes are grown here, often in apparently inaccessible places, and it is said that lives are sometimes lost in gathering them and in tilling the land.

In the second night after leaving Morphou I camped at Kalopanagiotissa, a village bisected by the stream, and reminding me strongly of others I had seen in Japan in similar localities, even down to the black colour of the huts, and the necessary vehemence of the conversations carried on across the water. Just below the village the stream passes between almost inaccessible cliffs, a fact brought unpleasantly

to my notice from my having pursued a *Cinclus* into a place in which advance and retreat were equally impossible. My safe arrival at the top of the cliff after a desperate climb was a piece of good fortune for which I cannot be sufficiently thankful.

I reached Kikko Monastery on the 25th May. It is situated at an altitude of 4000 feet, and is the home of a hundred monks and probationers, and many thousands of Swifts, Swallows, and Martins. The deep valleys around are clothed with arbutus and other evergreens, but the hills are arid-looking enough, their barren shaly rock only half hidden by vegetation. I had hoped to find some marked change in the bird-life at this elevation, but I was doomed to disappointment. The ever-present *Saxicola morio* and equally ubiquitous *Emberiza caesia* were common enough, and in the thicker coppices the Nightingale and Garden Warbler poured out a torrent of song, but there was little else, and I cursed my stupidity in having dismissed my mules and condemned myself to a five days' imprisonment in such a place.

At a short distance from the monastery there was a clump of pines where it was possible to obtain some little shade from a sun that had by this time become unpleasantly powerful. It was while watching, gun in hand, beneath these, that I first obtained a Coal Titmouse, which at once struck me by the extreme darkness of the plumage of the under surface. Mr. Dresser has described it at a recent meeting of the Zoological Society as a new species, and named it *Parus cypriotes* (Plate II.). It differs, he says, from *Parus ater* in having the upper parts brownish, as in *Parus britannicus*, but rather darker, in having the white nuchal patch almost obsolete, and in having the black on the throat extended much further down than in *Parus ater*, thus covering a much larger area. The underparts are tinged with buff, the flanks and under tail-coverts being much darker in tint.

This little *Parus* was far from plentiful, for I only shot four during my stay at the monastery, although I waited beneath the pines for them for the greater part of each morning. I never saw it at a lower elevation than this (4000 ft.), or any-

where except on or among the pines. On Troödos it was not uncommon, in small parties of five or six, which followed each other from tree to tree, and occasionally descended to the ground to feed. Its note is a feeble edition of that of *Parus ater*.

I expected to find *Cypselus melba* here, but did not see one.

The Martins (*Chelidon urbica*) built under the false arches on the eastern wall of the monastery, their nests clustered together in masses of ten or twelve. I noticed here a peculiarity about the Swallows' nests, which were placed in great numbers in the cloisters and corridors. The front was ornamented by three or four loose streamers of grass which hung down for six or eight inches or more. The difference in the colouring of the under surface of these birds is extraordinary. It is quite common in Cyprus to see it ranging from nearly white to a deep reddish buff, from *Hirundo rustica* to *H. savignii* in other words. Although one may often see these extremes in a paired couple, the differences in colouring do not appear to be sexual. In Cyprus, at any rate, it is impossible to allow that *H. savignii* is a good species. One more remark on these birds and I have done. It is, that though the Swallow is wonderfully common throughout the island, the Martin, on the other hand, is a very local bird.

I shaped my course westward on leaving Kikko, passing through country much like that in the neighbourhood of the monastery—deep valleys in all directions, only separated from one another by sharp ridges, along the brows of which the narrow trail for the most part led. The distant scenery was splendid, but our immediate surroundings were too bare for beauty. An hour or two after our start, however, we came to a part where the hills were sparsely clothed with pines, and here I saw several Jays*. I was fortunate in shooting a couple, for the slopes which we were passing must have been nearly 45°, ground where one cannot follow one's game with much facility. I also saw the Golden Oriole, for the first and only time during my visit to the island. My desti-

* From the feathers of these birds being in a much abraded condition, it is not possible to name them with any degree of certainty.

nation was Limni, the site of old Phœnician copper-mines, where a company have just commenced to sink a shaft. It is close to the sea, at the head of Chrysokkou Bay, and is a two days' journey from Kikko. The monastery of Chrysorogiatissa, whence there is a view of magnificent extent, formed my halfway house, and I was again detained here, though only for a day, one of my muleteers being down with fever.

I reached Limni June 1st. My road led for the greater part of the day over the white marl rocks that enter so largely into the geological composition of the island, and the heat and glare were intolerable. The summer in Cyprus is as trying, probably, as that in any other part of the world, but chiefly from the fact that there is no shade or verdure of any kind on which to rest the eye. Our ride was not rendered any more pleasant by the incessant attacks of an *Æstrus*, or some fly of that nature, upon the mules. This insect does not deposit the egg upon the coat of the animal, but seeks to enter the nostril for that purpose. So much are they feared by the mules that the very sight of them makes them restless, and they at once contract the nostril to the smallest possible size, and strive by plungings and shakings of the head to keep the insect off, a manœuvre which, if constantly kept up, will in time exhaust the patience of the most long-suffering rider. Almost the only birds that I saw worthy of mention were the Wood Pigeon and Linnet: the former, which appeared to be tolerably abundant in this district, I had only twice seen previously; the Linnets, a generally distributed species, were remarkable for the brightness of their colouring.

In Mr. Williamson (one of my hosts during my stay at Limni) I found a sportsman and Moufflon-hunter whose knowledge of the people, animals, and birds was probably more extensive than that of any other European in the island. It was at this time the close season for the Moufflon; and I was unable to go out after them as I had intended, but I was able to obtain some information about these animals which may, I think, be accepted as reliable. They are now almost entirely confined to the western side of the Troödos range, and although they are said to have been seen in the

neighbourhood of the military camp at the summit, such an occurrence must be regarded as very unusual. The rutting-season is late in October or at the beginning of November, and at this time the rams fight fiercely. The clashing of their horns is audible at a considerable distance, and a favourite native method of getting a shot is to knock two stones together in imitation of this sound, at the top of some hill in their favourite haunts. This device is said to be so successful, that if any ram is near he is nearly certain to be attracted by it. They have generally one young one at a birth, but sometimes two, and the kid is said to be so active that even on the day of its birth it can only with difficulty be run down by a dog.

Mr. Williamson estimated the total number of Moufflon at present existing on the island to be between 100 and 150, and considered the former number would be probably nearer the mark than the latter. The natives think there are more, having a superstition that once a year the saint Agio Mama herds the animals, and that if he finds more than 700 he spirits away the surplus, if less, supplies the deficiency. Nothing would induce a Cypriote to go hunting on this day.

In the cliffs formed in past ages by the Phœnicians in their search for copper I found the Roller and Bee-eater breeding, and spent a day in digging out their nests. The latter birds seem to prefer to make their burrows near the top of the cliff, and the length of it (sometimes as much as ten or twelve feet) is surprising. The Roller bred here in a nest so exposed that I could see the eggs from the brow of a cliff opposite. It was within a day or two of hatching a second brood.

While at Limni I heard of a cliff, six or eight miles distant, in which Peregrines, or birds of that nature, were supposed to build; but the heat was so great (the minimum night temperature being 81° Fahr.) that I was glad to be able to get a sporting native to visit it for me. He returned two days later with a young Bonelli's Eagle (*Nisaetus fasciatus*); but though I sent him back again with a promise of good pay if he obtained the parents or any Falcons for me, he did not succeed

in doing so. My only excursion was to an ancient site near Poli tou Chrysochou, where recent excavations have brought to light a quantity of Greek pottery of a late period. In the dry heat-stricken fields there was little life, and I only shot a Wood Pigeon and saw two Stone Curlews. In Cyprus the summer is not the season for the ornithologist, although it may be said to be fairly good for the sportsman. Mr. Williamson told me that in the Acamas district (the extreme western promontory of the island) he had shot a very large quantity of Francolin, Partridge, and Hares in ten days at the beginning of July. Near Poli, the Francolin could be heard calling in all directions; but it is difficult to flush these birds without dogs, and as I merely needed specimens for preservation, I only once went after them. The only animal of interest that I obtained at Limni was *Cynonycteris collaris*, a large frugivorous Bat, which inhabits a cave in the neighbourhood in some numbers.

I had now made up my mind to proceed to the summit of Troödos without delay, and accordingly made for Limassol along the south coast, stopping at Papho, Pissouri, and Episkopi on my way. I hardly recognized the latter place, so changed was it from its former beauty of apricot blossom and bright green foliage. Now it was brown, dry, and dusty to a degree, and hardly a bird was to be seen. On reaching Limassol I despatched my heavy baggage in advance, and two days later rode up to Troödos enveloped in clouds of dust and with a blazing sun overhead. I had no occasion to complain of the heat that evening, however. We dined wrapped in our ulsters and with paraffin stoves at our feet, and the thermometer, which had registered 83° Fahr. as the minimum night temperature at Limassol, now sank to 39°.

The military camp at Troödos is placed within a very short distance of the summit, at an elevation of about 6600 feet, and the mountain is here, as elsewhere, scantily clothed with pines. They have a dried-up and stunted appearance, as of trees that have strayed beyond their proper latitude. During the three days I remained here I found less of interest than

I had expected. I had heard of Woodpeckers, Nuthatches, and Crossbills, but I saw nothing of them, and the only birds characteristic of the region were *Certhia familiaris* and the *Parus* before mentioned, both of which are tolerably abundant. The other birds I noticed on the summit were some species of Eagle (possibly *Aquila heliaca*), *Gyps fulvus*, *Athene noctua*, the Hoopoe, Jay, Dipper, Partridge, Nightingale, *Hypolais elatica* and *Sylvia hortensis*, *Saxicola morio* and *Emberiza cæsia*, the two Shrikes, *Lanius nubicus* and *L. collurio*, and the Linnet, Chaffinch, and Raven. The last-named bird is very numerous and may be seen every afternoon flocking to the slaughter-house. It is worthy of note that the Grey Crow does not seem to come above Platreaes.

With Troödos my work in Cyprus practically ceased. I returned to Nikosia, June 20th, after an absence of three months and a half, and found the Jubilee rejoicings at their height. I got together my collections and went down to Larnaka, only to find a similar series of fêtes just commencing. On the last day of June the mail-steamer came in, and getting my luggage on board I bade adieu to the island and to some of the many kind friends who had done their best to assist me in my wanderings on it.

IX.—On the presence of Claws in the Wings of the Ratitæ.

By W. K. PARKER, F.R.S.

It has long been known that the Ostrich (*Struthio*) and the Nandu (*Rhea*) have a horny *unguis*—a nail or claw on their first and second wing-digits, those which correspond to our *thumb* and *index-finger*.

But in a paper sent by me to the Royal Society on the 13th of January, 1887 (only, as yet, published in abstract), I gave an account of the discovery of a small claw on the imperfect third digit of the wing in both the *Rhea* and the Ostrich—in the latter in a half-grown specimen, and in the

